

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5684

C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 6791

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PN, PQ, US

SUBJECT: HIGHLIGHTS OF 413TH PRC MEETING

1. CANAL TREATY NEGOTIATIONS: PANAMA'S COUNTER OFFER.
THE AMBASSADOR REPORTED THAT AMBASSADOR GONZALEZ-REVILLA
DELIVERED PANAMA'S POSITION PAPER TO THE UNITED STATES
DEPUTY NEGOTIATOR ON OCTOBER 29 AND THAT AMBASSADOR BUNKER
HAD RESPONDED WITH A NOTE TO NEGOTIATOR TACK. COPIES OF
THE PANAMANIAN PAPER WERE DISTRIBUTED TO THE PRC PRINCIPALS.

2. FOREIGN MILITARY SALES CREDITS. THE AMBASSADOR NOTED
THAT THE PROPOSED FY 1976 AND 977 FOREIGN SECURITY
ASSISTANCE BUDGET FOR PANAMA INCLUDED NO FUNDS FOR FMS
CREDIT SALES TO PANAMA. IN VIEW OF PANAMA'S IMPORTANCE
TO UNITED STATES SECURITY AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS IN LATIN
AMERICA AND THE EFFORTS BEING MADE TO CREATE A CLOSE AND
FRIENDLY RELATIONSHIP WITH PANAMA, THE PRC PRINCIPALS FIRMLY
AGREED IT WOULD BE INADVISABLE TO EXCLUDE PANAMA FROM
FMS CREDITS. THE AMBASSADOR AND THE CINC DECIDED TO
SEND A CABLE REQUESTING THAT FMS CREDITS BE AUTHORIZED
FOR PANAMA.

3. CHANGE OF STATUS. THE AMBASSADOR REPORTED THAT MILGP
HAD PREPARED A LETTER TO LT. COLONEL FLOREZ, THE CHIEF
OF STAFF OF THE NATIONAL GUARD, CONCERNING THE IMMIGRA-
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TION STATUS OF U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL AND DEPENDENTS

LIVING IN PANAMA. THE LETTER WAS BEING REVIEWED BY THE SOUTHCOM LEGAL ADVISER. GENERAL MCAULIFFE STATED THAT HE WOULD ASK GENERAL RICHARDSON TO REVIEW THE LETTER BEFORE RETURNING IT.

4. VISIT OF INTER-AMERICAN DEFENSE BOARD. THE MORNING PRESS HAD CARRIED CARACAS DATELINE REPORTS THAT THE PANAMANIAN MEMBER OF THE IADB HAD DESCRIBED US "TROOP MOBILIZATION" IN CANAL ZONE AS AN AFFRONT TO PANAMA. AS THE 65 MEMBER IADB GROUP WOULD ARRIVE IN PANAMA NOVEMBER 6 AS GUESTS OF THE NATIONAL GUARD, THE PRC AGREED THAT GENERAL MCAULIFFE SHOULD INVITE THE IADB GROUP TO VISIT MILITARY TRAINING SITES, PARTICULARLY THE JUNGLE TRAINING CENTER, IN THE CANAL ZONE. MILGP WOULD DELIVER THE LETTER OF INVITATION. CONCERN WAS EXPRESSED ABOUT RECENT PANAMANIAN CRITICISM OF UNITED STATES MILITARY ACTIVITIES WHICH HAD GROWN OUT OF THE REPORTED STATEMENT OF VENEZUELA'S PRESIDENT PEREZ. THE AMBASSADOR OBSERVED THAT THE PANAMANIAN EXPLOITATION OF THE ISSUE AS A PROPAGANDA PLOY WAS ILL-ADVISED.

5. SECURITY POSITIONS, SCHOOLS AND HOUSING. GOVERNOR PARFITT REPORTED THAT HIS CONSULTATION WITH CANAL EMPLOYEES CONCERNING THE REDUCTION OF SECURITY POSITIONS, AND THE CONSOLIDATION OF SCHOOLS AND HOUSING HAD BEEN POSTPONED FROM NOVEMBER 6 TO NOVEMBER 10 AT THE REQUEST OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT. THE DELAY WOULD ENABLE THE U.S. NEGOTIATORS TO INFORM THE PANAMANIAN NEGOTIATORS SIMULTANEOUSLY OF THE PROPOSED ACTIONS. THE GOVERNOR HOPED THAT THESE MEASURES WOULD BE WELL-RECEIVED BY THE PANAMANIANS; HOWEVER, INITIAL INFORMAL SOUNDINGS CONCERNING THE QUESTION OF CONSOLIDATING SCHOOLS HAD RECEIVED A RATHER INDIFFERENT RECEPTION. ALSO, WORD OF IMPENDING CHANGES HAD LEAKED TO EMPLOYEES, SOME OF WHOM HAD WRITTEN IN PROTEST TO CONGRESSMEN ABOUT THE POSSIBLE IMPOSITION BY THE GOVERNOR OF CHANGES WITHOUT FIRST CONSULTING THEM AS REQUIRED BY LAW. THE GOVERNOR SAID THAT THE LONGER HIS MEETING WITH EMPLOYEES WAS DELAYED, THE GREATER WOULD BE THE TENSION AND POTENTIAL OPPOSITION.

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6. POSSIBLE DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MILITARY PERSONNEL. GENERAL MCAULIFFE REPORTED HE HAD RECEIVED COMPLAINTS THROUGH CHAPLAINS AND UNIT COMMANDERS FROM MILITARY PERSONNEL LIVING IN PANAMA THAT THEY SUSPECTED THEY WERE BEING DISCRIMINATED AGAINST. LANDLORDS AND THE ELECTRICAL COMPANIES APPEARED TO BE THE OFFENDERS. THE AMBASSADOR AGREED THAT THE EMBASSY WOULD ASCERTAIN HOW DOCUMENTED COMPLAINTS COULD BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF

APPROPRIATE GOP AUTHORITIES.

7. UNILATERAL ACTIONS. GENERAL MCAULIFFE REPORTED THAT THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS WAS CONSIDERING THE GOP REQUEST TO USE ONE OR MORE OF THE TRANSISTHMIAN PIPELINES CONTROLLED BY THE U.S. THE PRC MEMBERS HAVE NO OBJECTION TO FULL USE BY PANAMA OF THE PIPELINES NOT NOW BEING USED. ALSO THEY AGREE THE GOP COULD HAVE SHARED USE OF THOSE PIPELINES NOW IN PARTIAL USE, PROVIDED U.S. AUTHORITIES CONTINUE TO HAVE THEIR NEEDS MET. THE AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT ONCE APPROVAL IN PRINCIPLE WAS GRANTED BY DOD, THE EMBASSY WOULD INQUIRE CONCERNING THE KIND OF FUEL THAT THE GOP PLANS TO SHIP THROUGH THE PIPELINES. THE PANAMANIANIANS MAY HAVE A STORAGE PROBLEM FOR FUELS RECEIVED ON THE PACIFIC SIDE AS THEY HAVE NO STORAGE TANKS.

8. COCO SOLO RAMPS. GENERAL MCAULIFFE HAD RECEIVED A MESSAGE FROM LT. GENERAL JOHN ELDER, J-5 OF THE OJCS, INDICATING THAT DOD HAS NO OBJECTION TO HANDLING THE COCO SOLO AGREEMENT IN AN INFORMAL MANNER, PROVIDED THAT THE PANAMANIANIANS INDICATE IN A WRITTEN RESPONSE THEIR CONCURRENCE IN THE TERMS OF UNDERSTANDING CONTAINED IN THE U.S. DRAFT "MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT". THE AMBASSADOR WILL DISCUSS THIS SUGGESTION WITH THE PANAMANIANIANS.

9. BOYD-ROOSEVELT HIGHWAY. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT HE WOULD DISCUSS WITH PRESIDENT LAKAS THE NEED FOR THE PANAMANIANIANS TO PLACE CONSTRAINTS ON THE USE OF THE BOYD-ROOSEVELT HIGHWAY IF THE U.S. IS TO AGREE TO CONTINUE WITH MAINTENANCE FOR AN ADDITIONAL PERIOD.

10. REDESIGNATION OF MILITARY INSTALLATIONS. GENERAL MCAULIFFE ANNOUNCED THAT THE 22 CANAL ZONE MILITARY

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INSTALLATIONS LISTED IN THE U.S. CODE OF FEDERAL REGISTER WOULD BE REDUCED TO 6 BASES AS FOLLOWS: PACIFIC AREA, ATLANTIC AREA, NAVAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY, ALBROOK AIR FORCE STATION, HOWARD AIR FORCE STATION AND QUARRY HEIGHTS. THE AMBASSADOR SUGGESTED THAT THIS MOVE SHOULD BE COORDINATED WITH AMBASSADOR BUNKER. THE CINC SAID THIS WOULD BE DONE AND THAT BRIEFINGS HAD BEEN ARRANGED FOR RICHARD WYROUGH AND GENERAL DOLVIN OF THE NEGOTIATING TEAM.
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